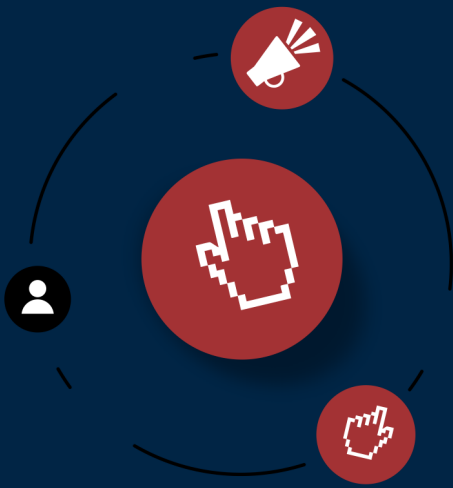




# Anti-Indian Racism on X

Causes, Trends, and Narratives  
(July–September 2025)



1629 K St. NW, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20006

The Center for the Study of Organized Hate (CSOH) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. CSOH is strongly driven by its mission to advance research and inform policies that combat hate, violence, extremism, radicalism, and disinformation.

Our research, strategic partnerships, and community engagement programs are guided by the vision of a more inclusive and resilient society against all forms of hate and extremism.

#### **Authors**

Raqib Hameed Naik, CSOH  
Rohit Chopra, Santa Clara University

#### **Data Analysts**

Zenith Khan, CSOH  
Sourav Dihingia, CSOH  
Saaima Khan, CSOH

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                                     |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. INTRODUCTION                                     | 1  |
| 2. METHODOLOGY                                      | 4  |
| 3. KEY FINDINGS                                     | 5  |
| 4. DATA ANALYSIS                                    | 6  |
| 5. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS                               | 9  |
| 5.1 DEPORTATION, INVASION, AND JOB THEFT NARRATIVES | 9  |
| 5.2 SLURS, MOCKERY, AND CASUAL ABUSE                | 11 |
| 5.3 INCIDENT-DRIVEN NARRATIVES OF RACISM            | 11 |
| 5.4 GENERAL ANTI-INDIAN RACISM                      | 12 |
| 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS                   | 13 |
| 7. ENDNOTES                                         | 16 |

# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report surveys the landscape of anti-Indian racism on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter). Recent months have seen a surge in anti-Muslim hate, racism, and xenophobia in the US, including an increase in anti-Indian racism.<sup>1</sup> Anti-Indian racism is aimed at both Indian-American citizens and non-citizens of perceived Indian origin. The latter category includes permanent residents, expatriates on work visas, students, and undocumented migrants. Expressions of anti-Indian racism are consistent with longstanding<sup>2</sup> and current patterns of racial hatred aimed at South Asians, other Asian, Latino, Black, Muslim, LGBTQ+, and immigrant<sup>3</sup> populations in the US. The ascendant wave of anti-minority sentiment in the US is rooted in the tumultuous politics of the current historical moment. It also mirrors global geopolitical trends such as the rise and prominence of far-right movements in different contexts.

Hatred targeting minorities, marginalized groups, and other vulnerable communities is pervasive on social media platforms, including X.<sup>4</sup> Hateful content produces tangible real-world consequences, harming targeted communities while reinforcing a sense of power among perpetrators. Such racism and bigotry have become defining features of today's digital environment, sustained and amplified by the rollback of protections against hate speech<sup>5</sup> and the weak and inconsistent enforcement of content moderation policies by major platforms.

In January 2025, the Center for the Study of Organized Hate released a report on anti-Indian racism on X<sup>6</sup>, following a visible uptick of anti-Indian hate on the platform in the wake of two events: Sriram Krishnan's appointment as Senior White House Policy Advisor on Artificial Intelligence; and a post on X by Vivek Ramaswamy on December, 26 2024, during the latter's brief tenure as a leader of Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). Since then, anti-Indian racism on social media, including X, has shown no signs of abating. This report maps the current state of anti-Indian racism on X. It lays out key themes and narratives in anti-Indian racist discourse, identifies spikes in anti-Indian sentiment, and highlights posts and topics reflecting such sentiment that have had significant reach and impact. Highlighting the risks and dangers of online racism, the report concludes with recommendations for appropriate measures that X should undertake to address anti-Indian hate and racism that targets vulnerable communities on the platform.

Online hate has serious consequences for minorities, including emboldening far-right extremist groups, exponentially increasing the threat of violence, and enabling real-world physical harm against them. In Ireland, for instance, social media was an amplifier<sup>7</sup> of far-right racism against Indians, which manifested itself in physical attacks against the community. The malaise of online hate destroys civil discourse among communities, places minorities in a position of precarity online, and contributes to a climate that encourages physical violence against these groups. Anti-minority hate, including racism, on social media platforms like X, accordingly, deserves urgent attention and redress. This report is a step in that direction.

The increase in anti-Indian racism on X since January 2025 can be situated in the context of several global and domestic trends. The first is the global backlash against migrants, including South Asians and Indians, in Europe, the UK<sup>8</sup>, North America, and Australia<sup>9</sup> which is a core ideological component of a worldwide far-right political resurgence. Anti-migrant sentiment is exploited by politicians and fanned by figures such as Elon Musk, who has stridently endorsed far-right political parties like Alternative für Deutschland (AfD)<sup>10</sup> in Germany and far-right activists like Tommy Robinson in the UK. In the US, MAGA adherents<sup>11</sup> and politically powerful influencers like Laura Loomer and Nick Fuentes enthusiastically endorse anti-minority and White nationalist sentiments. The racialized backlash against minorities is anchored in anxieties about the demographic transformation of Western nations by non-White immigrants. This deep-rooted fear often manifests itself in populist conspiracies like the Great Replacement Theory<sup>12</sup> (GRT). GRT is predicated on the notion that Whites will eventually be reduced to a minority in countries where they are presently a majority, as a result of a deliberate plan by migrants of color.

Secondly, anti-Indian hate can be situated within the broader landscape of anti-South Asian and anti-Asian racism in the US. Although it targets a range of Indian and South Asian groups, it makes no distinction between Indians and other South Asians, between Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and other Indian communities, or between Indian citizens and non-citizens. Anti-Indian hate shares important features in common and intersects with broader currents of xenophobia, Islamophobia, and extremist anti-immigrant discourse. Unsurprisingly, Indians are targeted online and offline not just as Indians but also as Muslims, Sikhs, migrants, or, more broadly, as people of color. Importantly, anti-Indian racism targets both highly-skilled Indian migrants as well as undocumented migrants. It embodies the contradiction in anti-minority rhetoric that migrants both steal ‘American’ jobs yet are a drain on public and national resources. This dual emphasis is a key driver of racialized resentment against Indians in the US.

Another source of anti-Indian racism is American anger against the H-1B visa program, which has enabled tens of thousands of Indians working largely in STEM fields to migrate to the US. The far-right in the US, including many MAGA voices,<sup>13</sup> have long insisted that “underqualified” Indians displace Americans from STEM jobs, which, in locations like Silicon Valley, tend to be well-paying and offer candidates the opportunity to work for prominent corporations. Anti-Indian racism pointedly targets Indians who are the biggest beneficiaries of H1-B visas and routinely account for over 70%<sup>14</sup> of all H-1B visas issued each year. Indian technology firms like Tata Consultancy Services and Infosys rank at the very top among sponsors of H1-B visas. As is the case with anti-Chinese racism on the subject, anti-Indian racism attributes the dominance of Indian workers in STEM jobs in the US to overly lax US immigration policies and the alleged exploitation of loopholes to monopolize jobs.

The fourth development is the recent souring of India-US ties,<sup>15</sup> which observers attribute to two factors: President Trump’s repeated insistence<sup>16</sup> that he was responsible for halting the India-Pakistan conflict in May 2025, a claim that India has consistently denied; and the

imposition of a punishing 50% tariff rate on India by the Trump administration, purportedly as retaliation for India's unfair tariffs<sup>17</sup> on American goods and as a punitive response<sup>18</sup> to India's decision to continue purchasing oil from Russia. Given the compulsions of national politics and the leanings of their respective domestic support base, neither Trump nor Narendra Modi, the Indian Prime Minister, appear inclined to back down from their positions. The tensions between India and the US have led to a ramping up of nationalistic rhetoric<sup>19</sup> on both legacy media and social media in India, while also providing fuel for anti-Indian sentiment on social media in the US.

Finally, particular incidents are also exploited by bad-faith actors to amplify racism against specific groups. A fatal crash<sup>20</sup> in Florida on August 12, 2025, following an illegal U-turn by a Sikh truck driver, Harjinder Singh, resulted in the death of three people. The event led to a spike in the harassment and online abuse<sup>21</sup> of the Sikh and Indian communities in the US. The allegation that Singh had entered the US illegally likely bolstered the already strong currents of anti-migrant and anti-Indian discourse on social media.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

To understand the scope and dynamics of anti-Indian racism on X (formerly Twitter), we conducted a targeted collection of posts on the platform to construct a dataset for analysis. Our methodology of data collection utilized a focused keyword-based strategy designed to capture posts that explicitly employed slurs, stereotypes, or narratives that unequivocally and categorically expressed anti-Indian racism. The following terms and combinations were used as primary search anchors: “pajeet,” “Indians smell,” “H1B scam,” “Indians stealing jobs,” “Deport Indians,” “Denaturalize Indians,” “Indian Americans,” and “Sikh.” We also ran combined keyword searches on X to ensure that we could capture overlapping narratives, such as those yoking anti-immigrant views with racial slurs or occupational stereotypes.

Using this approach, we constructed a dataset of 5,124 posts published between July 1 and September 7, 2025. To focus our analysis on content with significant measurable reach, we applied a filter of a minimum threshold of 1,500 views for each post. Posts whose total views fell below this threshold were excluded from the final analysis, resulting in a smaller, high-impact dataset of 680 posts. By limiting the final dataset to include content that had secured relatively high engagement, we were able to capture the most salient and visible anti-Indian racist narratives and themes that were circulating online during this time frame.

Each post was coded into narrative clusters through close textual analysis and cross-referencing engagement metrics such as views, reposts, and replies. This process allowed us to identify recurrent and persistent themes expressing anti-Indian hate. Equally important, it enabled us to identify the logic of broader narratives reflecting anti-Indian hate that successfully drove audience engagement. The dataset and the results of the coding provide a clear window into how online hate that targets Indians is framed, circulated, and amplified across X.

### 3. KEY FINDINGS

- 680 high engagement anti-Indian racist posts on X garnered 281.2M views between July 1 and September 7, 2025.

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- Narratives framing Indians as “invaders” and “job thieves,” alongside calls to deport Indians, accounted for 474 posts (69.7%) and 111.8M views, making immigration and expulsion themed rhetoric the primary driver of engagement.

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- H-1B resentment and job theft frames were prominent within the leading cluster, blending xenophobia with economic insecurity and amplifying calls for visa bans, denials, deportation and denaturalization of Indians.

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- 121 posts (17.8%) used anti-Indian slurs and drew 74.3M views.

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- 74 posts (10.9%) tied to the August 12 Florida truck crash involving a Sikh driver amassed 94.9M views, illustrating how single events are weaponized to stigmatize entire communities through occupational scapegoating.

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- Activity peaked in August 2025 with 381 posts and 189.9M views. The US-India tariff dispute and incident-based outrage coincided with narrative spikes, indicating that policy tensions and breaking news act as predictable accelerants of racist content.

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- Around 65% of posts were US-centered, confirming the US as the epicenter of anti-Indian digital racism during the study period.

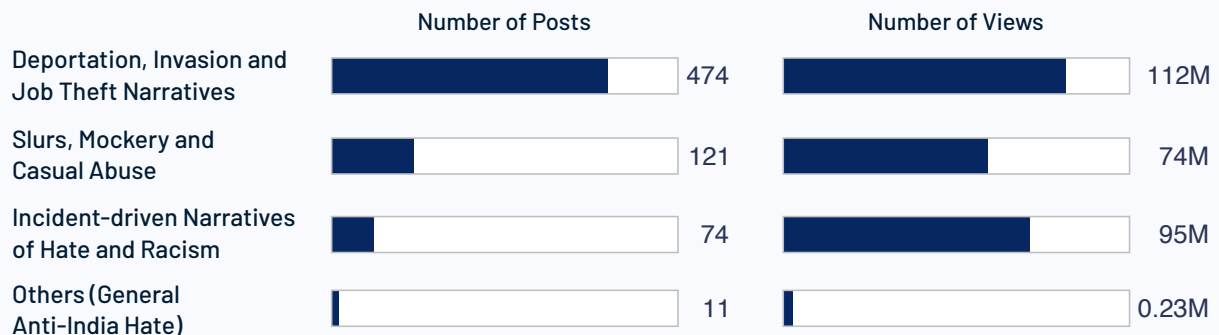
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## 4. DATA ANALYSIS

**W**e analyzed a dataset of 680 posts on X targeting Indians and Indian-origin communities. Together, these posts amassed more than 281 million views.

**FIGURE 1: DISTRIBUTION OF ANTI-INDIAN HATE NARRATIVES BY CLUSTER**



The overwhelming majority of posts in the dataset, nearly 70% of the total, centered on narratives of deportation, invasion, and job theft. Immigration and calls for deportation are thus the central pillars and main drivers of anti-Indian racism on X. Posts on these themes consistently frame Indians as fraudulent job stealers, unwanted migrants, or as agents of a demographic invasion that is destroying the US and other Western nations.

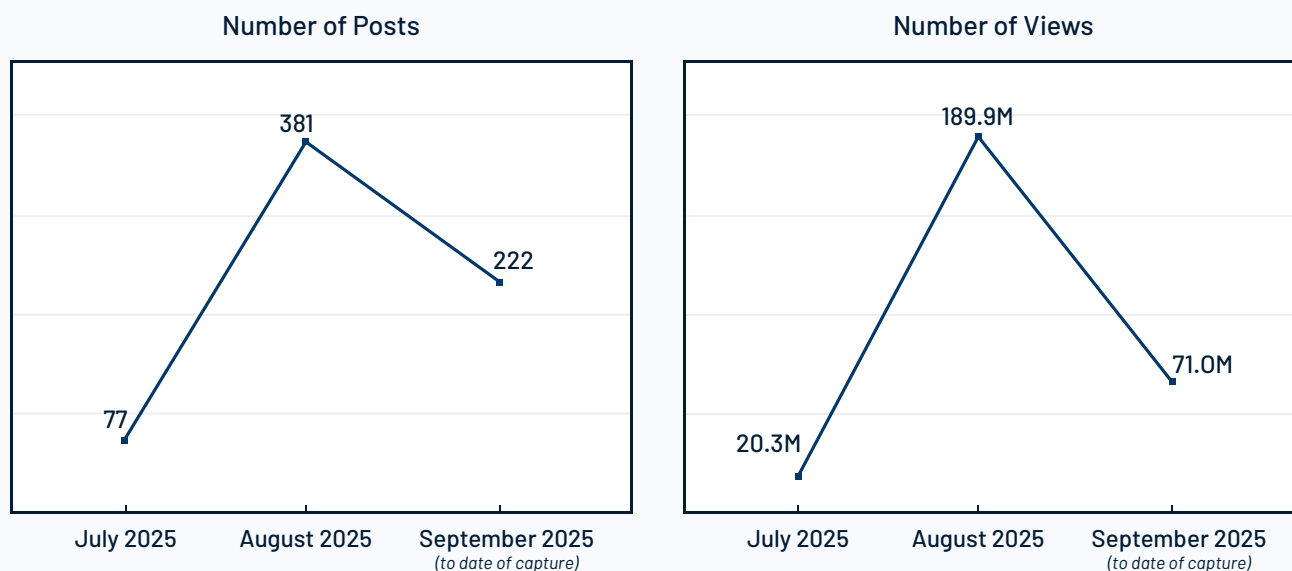
Racist slurs and mockery, though less voluminous, also play a crucial role in normalizing and reinforcing anti-Indian hate on X. The repeated use of racialized terms like “pajeet” or tropes of Indians as dirty or smelly provides the cultural scaffolding for more explicit exclusionary and hateful rhetoric.

The cluster of posts on the theme of incident-driven narratives that engender racism, while accounting for only 11% of the dataset, received 95 million views. This spike was tied directly to a widely publicized tragedy on Florida’s Turnpike in Fort Pierce on August 12, 2025, in which a Sikh truck driver was involved in an accident that killed three South Florida residents. The incident became a flashpoint online and was exploited by several X accounts to stigmatize an entire community through occupational scapegoating.

Finally, a small portion of the dataset consisted of posts that did not fall neatly into the main clusters but still conveyed explicit racist hostility toward Indians. These posts included broad claims that Indians were a universally disliked group. They also included portrayals of Indians as untrustworthy or dishonest, though these claims were not linked to rhetoric on immigration, employment, or specific incidents.

A temporal analysis of the dataset shows that online expressions of anti-Indian racism on X peaked in August 2025, when 381 posts collectively garnered nearly 190 million views.

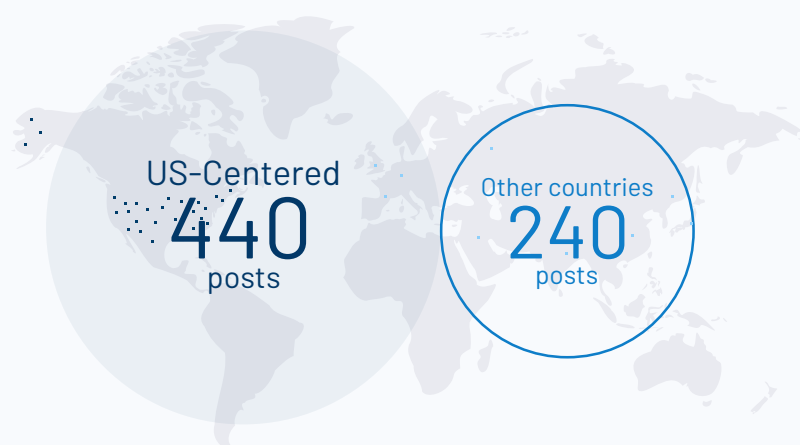
**FIGURE 2: MONTHLY TRENDS IN ANTI-INDIAN HATE POSTS AND VIEWS**



The spike in anti-Indian racist activity on X in August 2025 was driven by a convergence of two factors. The escalation of the US-India tariff war that month intensified nationalist and xenophobic rhetoric online in the US. The Florida truck crash, also in August, involving a Sikh driver, was exploited by users to racialize a tragic accident. These developments and the responses that they sparked created an environment in which anti-Indian racist narratives flourished. September 2025 also reflected this sustained momentum of anti-Indian racism on X, with 222 posts garnering 71 million views. Notably, July 2025 was comparatively quiet with 77 posts reflecting anti-Indian racism that accounted for 20 million views, marking a buildup phase before the surge.

The dataset also reveals a clear geographic focus. Around 65 percent of posts were US-centered, relating to the topics of H-1B visas, deportation, visa bans, demands for the denaturalization of Indian-Americans, and the Florida truck crash. The United States is clearly the epicenter of anti-Indian digital racism, with anti-immigrant sentiment and job-related hostile narratives converging most forcefully in discourse on X. Anti-Indian hostility was further intensified by the recent US-India tariff war, which bolstered existing online grievances against the community.

**FIGURE 3: GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION**

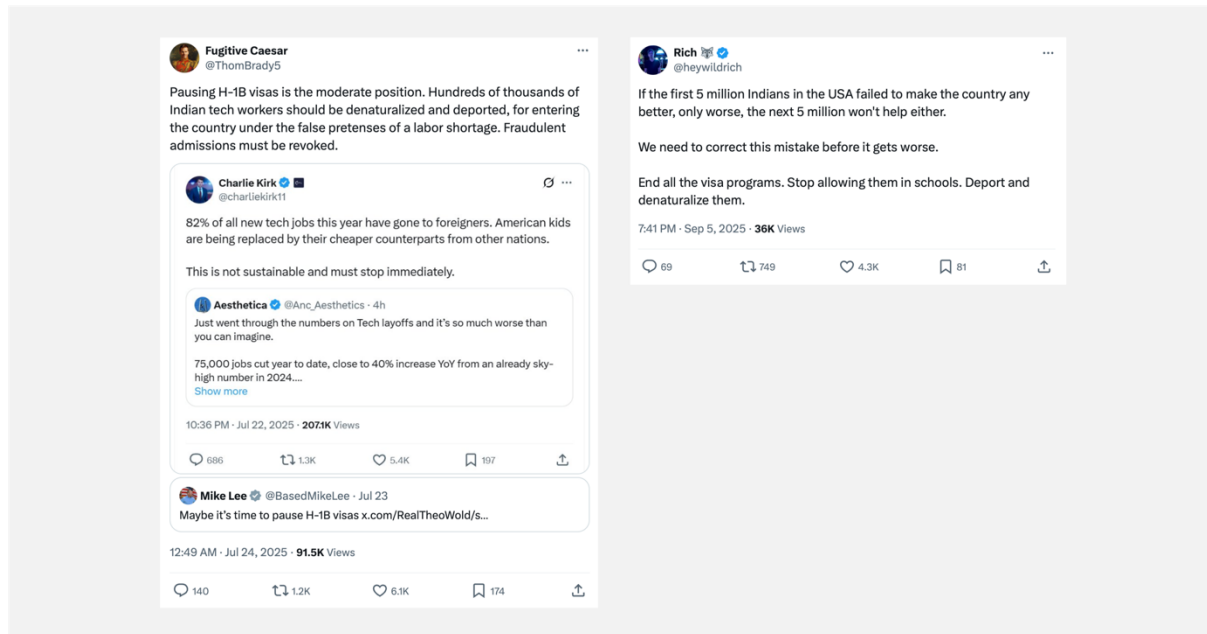


In contrast, roughly 240 posts referenced other countries, including Canada, the UK, Australia, Ireland, Japan, and locations in Europe. These posts mirrored broader patterns of anti-immigrant and anti-Indian racist sentiments in the US, with Indians characterized alongside other migrant communities as symbols of demographic and cultural upheaval.

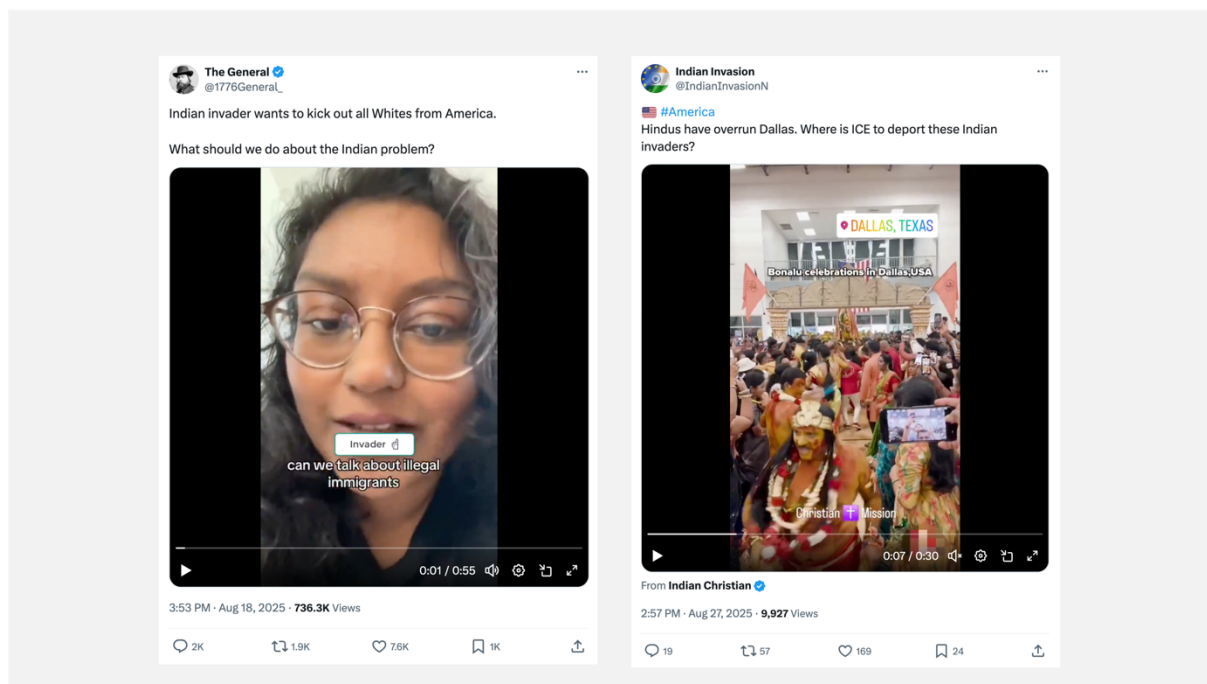
# 5. NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

## 5.1. DEPORTATION, INVASION, AND JOB THEFT NARRATIVES

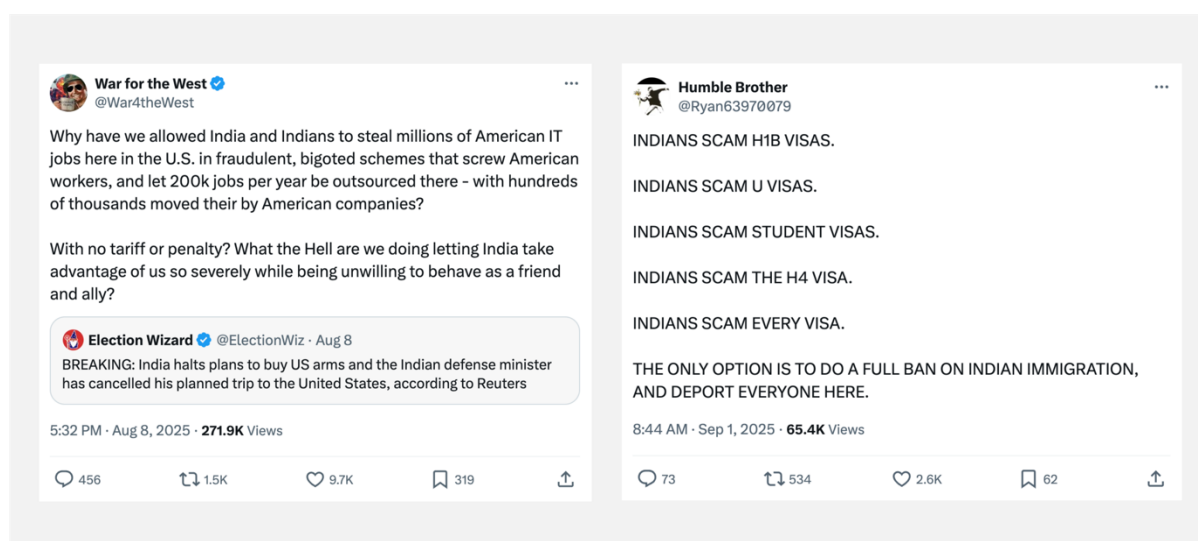
The dominant cluster in the X dataset, comprising 474 posts, depicts Indians as frauds, invaders, and job thieves, who need to be expelled and banned from the US. Posts in this category also demand mass deportations of Indians, termination of their visas, and denaturalization of naturalized Indian citizens.



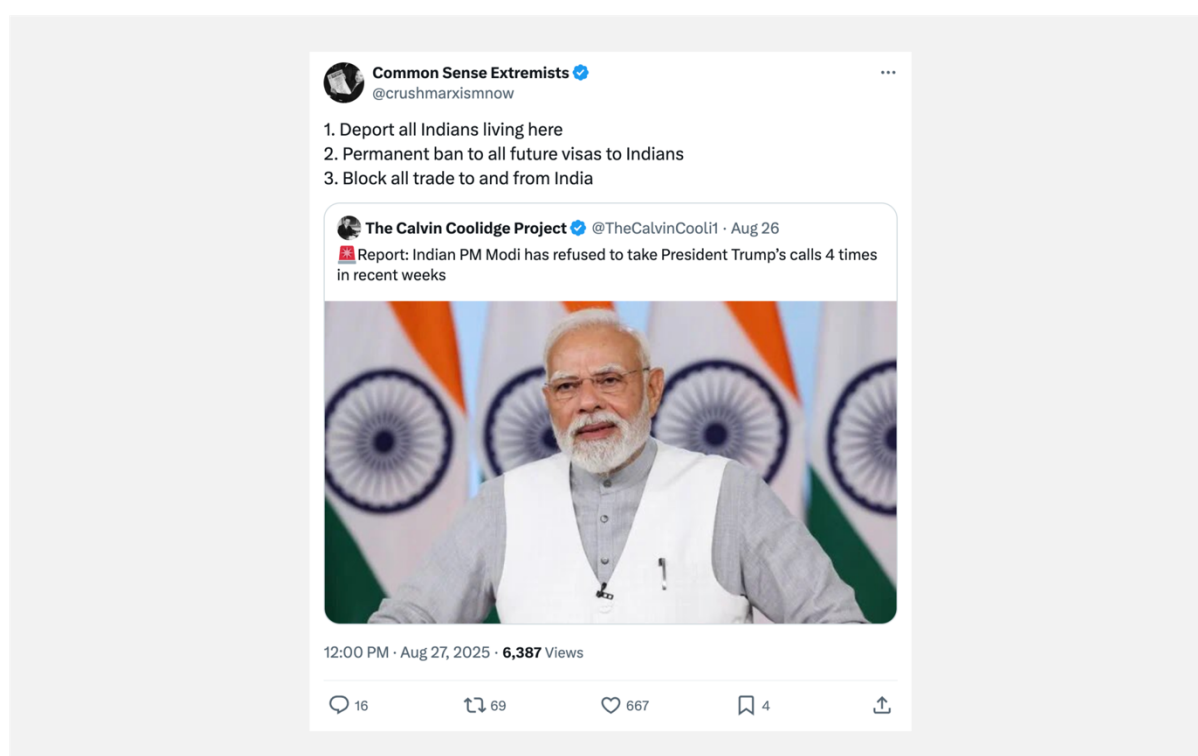
Many posts explicitly echoed Great Replacement Theory rhetoric, portraying Indians as displacing White populations in White-majority Western nations.



Narratives about Indian workers on H-1B visas were especially prominent in the cluster. Posts on the theme portrayed Indian technology workers as cheats and frauds, accusing them of stealing jobs that rightfully belong to Americans.

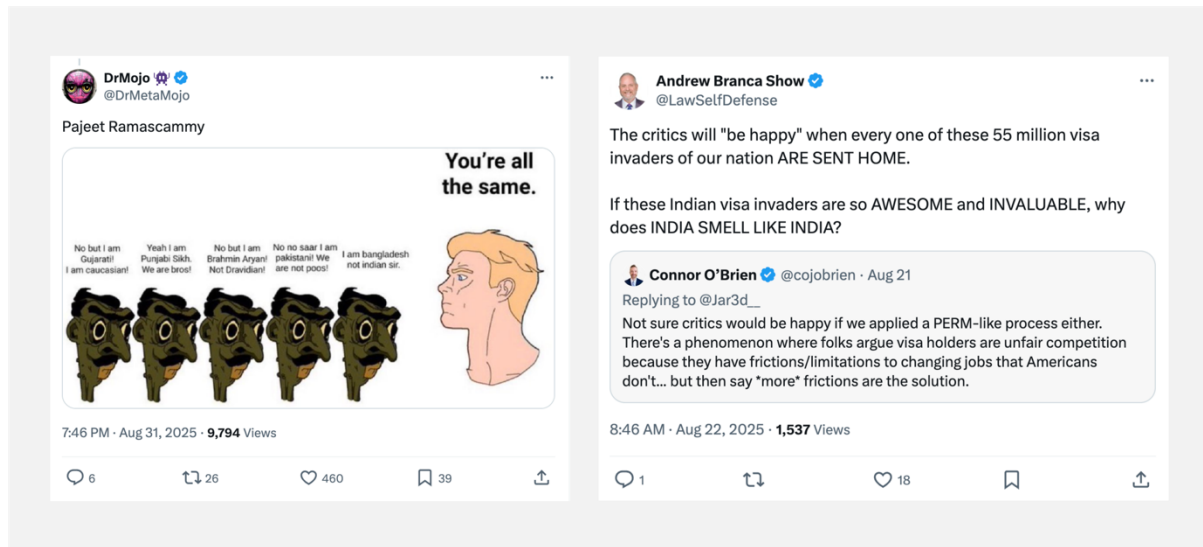


This cluster demonstrates how xenophobic and economic insecurities converge in anti-Indian racism on X. Such expressions of racism merge cultural animosity with political demands, cloaking racism under the guise of “protecting American jobs” or “preserving national security.” It is not coincidental that the August 2025 peak in hostile anti-Indian content coincided with debates over the US–India tariff war.



## 5.2. SLURS, MOCKERY, AND CASUAL ABUSE

Posts in this cluster show how the casual degradation of Indians forms the cultural baseline for more explicit expressions of racism. Across 121 posts in the category, users repeatedly employed racialized slurs such as “pajeet” and tropes that depicted Indians as dirty, smelly, or unhygienic. Many of these posts circulated in meme format, often mocking Indian names or accents, and were optimized for virality with short captions and image macros.



Aside from the specific insults levelled at Indians, the deeper significance of such posts is that they normalize anti-Indian ridicule as a form of racism. By consistently portraying Indians as dirty, laughable, or inherently unworthy of respect or dignity, such posts clear a discursive space for calls for draconian measures such as the deportation of the group.

This cluster of posts underscores that slurs and memes are not trivial forms of mockery or humor with ephemeral impact but create the discursive framework that sustains wider campaigns of hate. Memes and insults embed hostility in the everyday language of digital culture, thoroughly routinizing it and masking its insidiously dangerous effects.

## 5.3. INCIDENT-DRIVEN NARRATIVES OF RACISM

This cluster of posts illustrates how narratives related to particular incidents can rapidly escalate racism on online platforms like X. Although comprising only 74 posts, the cluster generated disproportionately high engagement, far outpacing other clusters in relative terms. The high level engagement for the category was directly related to coverage of a tragic accident on Florida's Turnpike in Fort Pierce on August 12, 2025, in which a Sikh truck driver was involved in a crash that claimed the lives of three South Florida residents.

Far-right accounts on X weaponized the tragedy almost instantly. Posts called for Sikhs and Indians to be banned from driving trucks, portraying them as unsafe, reckless, and unqualified to meet the demands of driving on American highways.



Other posts in the cluster framed the crash not as an isolated incident but as proof of general negative cultural and racial traits, exploiting the tragedy to collectively stigmatize both Sikhs and Indians.

Such posts reflect a long-standing racist pattern of occupational scapegoating, found online and offline in ample measure, according to which immigrant communities are vilified through their association with particular jobs. In this instance, Sikh truck drivers were cast as inherently incompetent and dangerous outsiders, unfit to participate in routine occupational activity in America. The online response on X to the Florida incident demonstrates how a tragedy involving a member of a minority group can be transformed into a powerful narrative weapon that can reinforce racist stereotypes with significant speed and reach. Such narratives generate large-scale virality whose online reach far exceeds that of similar events that do not involve minorities.

## 5.4. GENERAL ANTI-INDIAN RACISM

A small remainder of the dataset of 11 posts consisted of generalized racist sentiments against Indians that did not fit neatly into the main clusters. These posts portrayed Indians as a universally disliked community that is inherently unwelcome in the US, though the posts did not make specific references to immigration, employment, or any particular incidents.

Though small in terms of both volume and engagement, these posts are important because they show how negative generalizations about Indians circulate and operate as ambient hostility against the community. Unlike specific narratives of immigration or job theft, these statements are not tethered to policy debates or particular incidents but reflect a generalized animus toward Indian identity itself.



## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In today's politically fraught and socially divisive climate in the United States, social media platforms serve as convenient weapons for racism. They are instrumental in spreading misinformation and disinformation, inciting mass outrage against specific groups, reinforcing stereotypes through abuse and threats, and exposing targeted communities to the very real risk of serious harm and violence. For minority and vulnerable groups, the risks of online hatred in a politically explosive environment cannot be understated.

The Indian-American population in the United States numbers 5.2 million,<sup>22</sup> defined as “people living in the United States who self-identify as Indian.” Estimates of unauthorized migrants<sup>23</sup> of Indian origin range from 70,000 to 220,000. Over a million Indians<sup>24</sup> are currently in queue for green cards, while the number of students from India is a little over 330,000. The combination of a visible minority perceived as dominating prominent high-paying sectors such as STEM fields and monopolizing visas for highly-skilled workers, while also contributing to the population of undocumented migrants, renders Indians in the US uniquely vulnerable to hate and racism in an atmosphere in which anti-minority and anti-migrant sentiment is on the boil.

In recent months, social media platforms have abandoned measures for combating misinformation<sup>25</sup> and have walked back their policies<sup>26</sup> against violence and, in the US, against online hate speech.<sup>27</sup> While measures to curb discriminatory, racist, hateful, and violent speech on a single platform like X or on social media at large cannot by themselves resolve complex societal challenges such as racism or political polarization, they are urgently necessary to reduce the risks and harms facing minority groups like Indians in the US today. Consistent, principled enforcement of existing policies, together with the development of new measures that respond to the evolving challenges of online racism and hate, represents an essential first step in this direction.

The following seven recommendations outline concrete steps that X can adopt to improve the recognition of racist and hateful content, empower users to report abuse, and ensure consistent, meaningful enforcement of its anti-hate policies.

**A. Recognition of Anti-Indian/South Asian Racial Slurs:** X's policy on hate speech prohibits “targeting others with repeated slurs, tropes or other content that intends to degrade or reinforce negative or harmful stereotypes.” Enforcing this policy requires regular updates and the monitoring of hateful slurs that emerge in response to various events, whether larger geopolitical developments or local incidents. Our report shows that a number of South Asia-focused racial slurs continue to be widely used on the platform. Some terms like ‘pajeet’ and narratives like Indians as an unhygienic people are context-agnostic, while narratives of Indians as job thieves emerge in the context of specific developments, such as the reduction of job opportunities in the American technology sector. Content moderation



thus requires active monitoring of the use of racialized terminology, as well as a sophisticated understanding of context. X must ensure that its content moderation policy is adequately attuned to such nuances on and beyond the platform.

**B. External Stakeholder Engagement Framework:** Stakeholder engagement is critical for all platforms, and X must proactively reach out to scholars, activists, and community leaders for advice on hate speech trends and policy updates. This must be done transparently so users can understand policy changes and external stakeholders can monitor how their recommendations are implemented and what impact they have. X should consider obtaining regular and systematic input from domain experts in US and diasporic South Asian politics and culture, advocates working to mitigate the harms of online hate speech in the US and beyond, and community representatives who can speak to the real harms caused to community members by hateful and racist speech.

**C. Reporting Intersectional Hate:** X's current reporting tools do not allow for flexibility in reporting intersectional forms of hate. For example, a post could insinuate that Indians are unhygienic (Hate) and include a call for 'cleaning' the country (Violent Speech). Users can only report one violation at a time, which means that in the case that a user fails to correctly identify the specific violative clause, the piece of content may continue to be hosted on the platform.

**D. Enforcement Options:** X must improve its enforcement system through a series of actions, including the following.

- a. Disqualification from Premium Services:** Accounts that repeatedly post hateful or extremist content must be barred from X Premium. Pre-verification checks should ensure that users do not have a history of hateful or extremist conduct.
- b. Creator Monetization:** Currently, extremist and hateful content are categorized under 'Restricted Monetization.' These categories of content must be upgraded to the level of 'Prohibited Monetization'.
- c. Recommender Systems:** Recommender systems form the basis of most social media platforms, which means that extremist and hateful content can be promoted by users exploiting the mechanism. X must perform a systematic review of its recommender systems and publish its approach towards preventing the recommendation of hate and extremism.

**E. Proactive Use of Community Notes:** X's Community Notes feature, which enables contributors to add contextual information such as fact-checks beneath posts, should be more systematically leveraged to counter non-factual and fabricated claims in real time. The proactive and transparent use of Community Notes can serve as an important early-intervention tool to reduce the spread and impact of false or harmful narratives.

**F. Transparency:** Many jurisdictions require platforms to publish transparency reports (for example, the Digital Safety Act in the European Union and the Online Safety Act in the U.K.).

X could use the opportunity to clarify the extent of anti-Indian and/or South Asian hate on the platform and detail its actions regarding the moderation of actionable content. X leadership could also proactively provide additional context of trends in violative content, especially in relation to marginalised groups and communities.

**G. Counterspeech:** Counterspeech is defined as speech that challenges hateful narratives. Platforms have long sought to promote counterspeech as a better solution to hateful content as opposed to bans and restrictions on violative content. X must identify a coherent counterspeech strategy that aligns with the company philosophy. This may include flagging hateful and racist speech, enhanced visibility for counterspeech that challenges hateful speech, and offering premium features for free or at a discounted rate for vetted counterspeakers and organizations working in the counterspeech space.

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1629 K St. NW, Suite 300  
Washington, D.C. 20006

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